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1 July 1968

MISC-5

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Information Processing Staff/OPPB

SUBJECT : Request for Comments on Proposed Addendum
to the USA Standard Code for Information
Interchange, X3.4-1967

REFERENCE : Memo fr National Bureau of Standards dtd
23 May 68, same subject

1. One of the principal reasons subject Addendum is up for consideration at this time is the common practice of providing the New Line (NL) mode of operation on newly developed equipment instead of or in addition to the Carriage Return (CR) and Line Feed (LF) mode of operation which has been traditional with older, teletype-like equipment. Any standard which does not provide CR-LF will be agonizing, to say the least, in communications systems. These systems generally have substantial amounts of installed equipment which operate in the CR-LF mode. However, standards set the course for the future and, in the long run, NL seems destined to replace CR-LF. The CR-LF mode is more an accommodation to early equipment technology than to user preference or current equipment technology. For example, most teletype equipment operates in a CR-LF mode, but the IBM 2741 communications terminal operates in an NL mode.

2. From our vantage point, NL is preferable to CR-LF. NL is faster, simpler to operate, and eliminates possible operator error, e.g., CR without LF. The use of CR for returning on the same line for underlining, mass application of diacritical marks, etc. is a marginal requirement. It should be noted that the most widely used electrical keyboard printer device is the standard electric typewriter and this device (which operates in what could be described as NL mode) has been applied satisfactorily to a wide range of applications.

3. In view of the above, I believe that the proposed Addendum to the USA Standard Code for Information Interchange, X3.4-1967 should

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be supported as an Addendum to the USA Standard and included in the ASCH Federal Standards; thus, NL or CR-LF can be applied where each can be used most advantageously, accepting the penalty of compatibility adjustments where necessary.

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cc: CSA/OCS

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